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Retiree Kept Close CIA Ties

Chin Indictment Details Alleged 30 Years as Spy

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A former Central Intelligence Agency analyst accused of spying for China for more than 30 years worked as a consultant for the CIA until his arrest last week and maintained close ties with his ex-colleagues at the agency, according to an indictment returned yesterday.

The indictment, issued by a federal grand jury in Alexandria, alleged that Larry Wu-Tai Chin, 63, a former mid-level CIA employee, met with Chinese intelligence officials on at least a dozen occasions, including a 1981 meeting with a top Chinese intelligence officer.

In 1982, the indictment said, Chinese intelligence officials conferred on Chin the title of deputy bureau chief, presumably for Washington. U.S. officials said they believe this was an honorary title for Chin, who, according to the FBI, began spying for the



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Chinese even before he was hired by the CIA in 1952.

Officials said Chin, who allegedly was paid more than \$140,000 by Chinese intelligence agents, is believed to be the first person charged with spying for the Communist Chinese government in the United States. The suspect's lawyer, Peter Mey-

ers, said in court Saturday that his client was innocent.

Chin, an Alexandria resident who retired from the CIA in 1981 as a GS-13 intelligence officer, had access to a broad range of classified information in connection with his job in the agency's Foreign Broadcast Information Service, according to the indictment. The unit monitors and analyzes foreign radio broadcasts from around the world at its Rosslyn headquarters, where Chin worked, and elsewhere.

In addition, the indictment said, the foreign broadcast service translates classified documents for other branches of the CIA, which means that Chin, who is fluent in Chinese and English, had access to sensitive CIA information relating to China.

A former broadcast service employee has said in an interview that part of Chin's duties included translating documents dealing with covert CIA operations in the Far East.

Chin met with the vice minister of China's Ministry of Public Security, the Chinese version of the Soviet KGB, in Hong Kong and Macao in 1981, the indictment says. "This guy was no slouch," said one source familiar with his alleged activities. "He was treated royally whenever he went over there."

Under the more relaxed policies regarding foreign visits to China initiated by Deng Xiaoping, the nation's top leader, China has reorganized its security apparatus to improve its ability to catch spies. The Ministry of Public Security, for which Chin is accused of working, has become a powerful agency with the prime responsibility for counterespionage.

Much of the information about Chin's alleged espionage activities came from Chin, who discussed his work with FBI agents, according to sources familiar with the investigation. Chin's arrest late Friday night climaxed a nearly two-year FBI investigation. Officials have refused to say how Chin's alleged activities were uncovered.

Chin, who was born in Peking, went to work for American government offices overseas in 1948, and joined the CIA in Okinawa in 1952.

He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1965, four years after his transfer to the United States. He worked in Northern Virginia from 1970 until he retired 11 years later.

One question being raised in the intelligence community is how Chin's alleged activities went undetected so long.

Employees of the Foreign Broadcast Information Service are among the CIA employees who are supposed to routinely receive polygraph tests, according to a source familiar with CIA operations. It could not be determined whether Chin was tested.

Chin smuggled classified CIA documents from his office in his briefcase and in his jacket, according to the FBI. Between 1976 and 1982, he gave film of documents he photographed to a courier for the Chinese in periodic meetings at a Toronto shopping center, according to the indictment.

Within 10 days of his January 1981 retirement, Chin began working as a private contractor for the Foreign Broadcast Information Service's translating arm, and continued to do so until his arrest, the indictment said.

During that same period, Chin continued spying for the Chinese, the indictment said, and in a September 1983 meeting in Hong Kong pointed out another employee of the foreign broadcast service as a possible spy recruit. Chin met with Chinese intelligence officials in the Far East as recently as last February and March, according to the indictment.

Chin, who lives with his wife in Alexandria's Watergate at Landmark condominiums, is being held without bond pending a hearing before U.S. Magistrate W. Curtis Sewell at 2 p.m. today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph Aronica, who is prosecuting Chin, will argue that Chin should remain in custody while awaiting trial.

Chin is charged with one count of conspiring to commit espionage, which carries a maximum penalty of life in prison and a \$250,000 fine.